

Order of Worship for May 26, 2024 - Trinity Sunday

Prelude

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Opening Hymn: *“Holy, Holy, Holy”* – Hymn #507

The Sacrament of Holy Baptism: Emma Kate Moscoso

Confession and Forgiveness

P: In that name, and with that faith--as dear children approaching a loving parent, as sinners redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, as believers filled with the Holy Spirit--let us confess our sins to almighty God.

C: Let us seek forgiveness.

P: Most merciful God,

C: we have been unworthy and disobedient children. We have ignored our Father's admonitions, disregarded our Savior's instructions, grieved the Holy Spirit. We are not worthy to be called children of God. But we beg You--of Your fatherly compassion, by Your saving merits, at Your inviting call--to have mercy on us and grant us Your forgiveness.

P: God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him might not perish but have eternal life. To those who believe in Jesus Christ, the heavenly Father gives the Holy Spirit that they may be children of God. Rejoice in the Lord; your sins are forgiven--in the name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

Service of the Word

Entrance Psalm:

P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity and the undivided Unity.

C: Let us given glory to Him because He has shown His mercy to us.

P: Ascribe to the LORD, O mighty ones,

C: ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.

P: Ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name;

C: worship the LORD in the splendor of His majesty.

P: The voice of the LORD is powerful;

C: the voice of the LORD is majestic.

P: The LORD sits enthroned over the flood;

C: The LORD sits enthroned as King forever.

P: The LORD gives strength to the people;

C: The LORD blesses His people with peace.

ALL: Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

P: Blessed be the Holy Trinity and the undivided Unity.

C: Let us give glory to Him because He has shown His mercy to us.

Hymn of Praise: *“From All That Dwell Below the Skies”* – **Hymn #816**

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

Prayer of the Day

P: Almighty and everlasting God, You have given us grace to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity by the confession of a true faith and to worship the Unity in the power of the Divine Majesty. Keep us steadfast in this faith and defend us from all adversities; for You, O Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, live and reign, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 6:1-8

R: In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the LORD sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of His robe filled the temple. Above Him stood the seraphim. Each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts; the whole earth is full of His glory!” And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of Him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a burning coal that he had taken with tongs from the altar. And he touched my mouth and said: “Behold, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away, and your sin atoned for.” And I heard the voice of the LORD saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?” Then I said, “Here I am! Send me.”

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Epistle Lesson: Acts 2:14a, 22-36

R: But Peter, standing with the eleven other disciples, lifted up his voice and addressed them: ... "Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs that God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves know— this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men. God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it. For David says concerning Him,

"I saw the LORD always before Me,
for He is at My right hand that I may not be shaken;
therefore My heart was glad, and My tongue rejoiced;
My flesh also will dwell in hope.

For You will not abandon My soul to Hades,
or let Your Holy One see corruption.

You have made known to Me the paths of life;

You will make Me full of gladness with Your presence.'

"Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that He would set one of his descendants on his throne, He foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that He was not abandoned to Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God raised up, and of that we all are witnesses. Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says,

"The LORD said to my Lord, Sit at My right hand,
until I make Your enemies Your footstool.'

Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

Holy Gospel: John 3:1-17

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. John the 3rd chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord

P: Now there was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" Jesus answered, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit." Nicodemus said to Him, "How can these things be?" Jesus answered him, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things? Truly, truly, I say to you, We speak of what We know, and bear witness to what We have seen, but you do not receive Our testimony. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except He who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through Him."

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

Children's Message:

Sermon Hymn: *"God Loved the World So That He Gave"*-- **Hymn #571**

Sermon: *"Don't You Understand?"* – **John 3:1-17**

It was another week of storms here in Iowa. The town of Greenfield in southwest Iowa was heavily damaged. My mother in law's house lost some trees. When faced with disasters like this, we often try to understand what happened, why it happened. We try to understand so that it won't happen again. We try to understand because we think if we understood everything we would have a sense of control over it.

Nicodemus was a Pharisee, and Pharisees thought that they understood God, but they tried to understand God in order to control. Pharisees kept the Law. Pharisees followed the Ten Commandments. Pharisees paid tithes, guarded the Sabbath, and strictly kept Old Testament regulations and requirements. Nicodemus was also a member of the Jewish ruling council—the Sanhedrin—the seventy-member Jewish Senate. The Sanhedrin judged people according to a book called the Mishnah. The Mishnah contains 613 commandments. As a Pharisee and a member of the Sanhedrin, if there was anyone who should have understood what God was up to in Jesus, it should have been Nicodemus.

Nicodemus first came to Jesus at night. More, however, is going on than just the time of day. Nicodemus is not just literally in the dark. He's figuratively in the dark. He doesn't understand what's going on. He doesn't understand what Jesus is teaching. He doesn't understand what God is doing in and through Jesus. He is in the dark.

Jesus knows this. He knows that Nicodemus doesn't understand. That's why Jesus says to Nicodemus, "Unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). There is no chitchat here. No idle talk. Jesus goes straight to the point. Jesus says our best won't do, our works won't work. We must be born again. In John 3:1–8, Jesus uses the term "born" eight times—eight times in eight verses! Do you think Jesus is trying to make a point?

How active were you when you were born? Were you talking on a cellphone with your mother, telling her when to push? Did the doctor ask you to measure the contractions and report from inside the womb? Did you place your hands against the top of the womb and push yourself out? Postpartum celebrations applaud the work of the mother, not the child. Mom gets a medal. The child gets a pacifier and a blanket!

Here's the point. We were all passive when we were born. We didn't do a thing. We weren't born because of what we did. Our mother did all the work. The same is true for our spiritual birth. God does all the work.

Do you know the most quoted Bible verse in America? "God helps those who help themselves." But there's a problem with that. It's not in the Bible! God doesn't help those who help

themselves, because God knows we cannot help ourselves. God knows that He has to do 100 percent of the work! That's why Jesus uses "born" eight times in eight verses!

"Jesus answered, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God' " (John 3:5). We are born again of water and the Spirit! And what's that called? Holy Baptism! The Holy Spirit is really present—in, with, and under the water—creating new life!

Martin Luther writes in his Small Catechism that Baptism "works forgiveness of sins, rescues from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe this, as the words and promises of God declare" (SC, Baptism, Second Part). The reformer writes in his Large Catechism, "There is no work done here by us, but a treasure, which God gives us and faith grasps" (LC IV 37). Also from his Large Catechism: "Here in Baptism there is freely brought to everyone's door such a treasure and medicine that it utterly destroys death and preserves all people alive" (LC IV 43).

If you've been baptized, you have new eyes to see God's beauty, a new mind to understand God's Word, a new voice to sing God's praises, new hands for service, and new feet to run the race of faith.

Nicodemus asked, "How can these things be?" (John 3:9). Jesus answered, "Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?" (John 3:10). As Israel's teacher, Nicodemus should have understood that the Old Testament is all about God's actions, not our own, even when we don't fully understand what God is doing at work. God created everything. God called Abraham. God freed the people from slavery in Egypt. God led them to the Promised Land. God led them home after the Babylonian exile.

God is the Giver. Grace is His idea. Forgiveness comes from Him. Can God really be that generous? That loving? That giving? Yes. Yes. And yes! In John 3:16, Jesus doesn't say, "whoever achieves" or "whoever succeeds." Jesus says, "Whoever believes."

Did Nicodemus believe? Maybe not right then, but the Holy Spirit wasn't done with him yet. We don't know for sure, but many have guessed that this wasn't the only time Nicodemus met with Jesus in his search for understanding. This isn't the only time Nicodemus is mentioned. In John 7, he's the only Pharisee who isn't openly hostile to Jesus. And in John 19, he's mentioned alongside Joseph of Arimathea as the ones who ask Pilate for Jesus' body after the crucifixion, and begin the burial preparations. "Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight" (John 19:39). With the fulfillment on the cross of the prophecy that Jesus had made to Nicodemus that he would see the Son of Man lifted up (John 3:14), Nicodemus comes into the light. Nicodemus, the one who came in the dark, now lives in the light. The one who crept through the shadows now comes to the cross.

That's true for all of the baptized. We celebrate that we are born again of water and the Spirit (John 3:5). Water and Spirit appear together first in Genesis 1:2, "The Spirit of God was

hovering over the face of the waters.” Just so, the Holy Spirit is present in the water when we are baptized in the name of our triune God. Like Nicodemus, we, too, are born from above, born again.

Being baptized and the Christian life go hand in hand. In his Large Catechism, Martin Luther writes, “Every Christian has enough in Baptism to learn and to do all his life” (LC IV 41). Luther connects being baptized with the life of faith. It is the “present tense” of Baptism. Again, from his Large Catechism, “We must think this way about Baptism and make it profitable for ourselves. So when our sins and conscience oppress us, we strengthen ourselves and take comfort and say, ‘Nevertheless, I am baptized’ ” (LC IV 44).

We hear this Gospel lesson as we remember Trinity Sunday. We remember how God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; not three Gods, but one God. And like some other parts of faith, the Trinity can be hard to understand. We’re often left to using metaphors like a clover or an apple or the phases of water to try to understand, but each of those falls short, and can even lead us into heresies and error. But as we watch Nicodemus struggling to understand how God is at work in Jesus, as we struggle to understand how God is at work in the world, we know we’re not alone. We know that it’s ok that we don’t always fully understand. Knowing there’s a God who loves us, cares for us, sent Jesus to die for us, and sends the Holy Spirit on us to bring us to faith and keep us in faith is enough.

Prayer of the Church:

Service of the Sacrament

P: The Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts.

C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is right to give God thanks and praise.

Prayer of Thanksgiving:

P: We give thanks to You, God, for You have revealed Yourself to us in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit so that we can clearly see Your great love for us. Bless us so that now we children of Your heavenly Father receive Your true body and blood, Lord Jesus, asking that You, Holy Spirit, strengthen our faith through that meal. Hear us as we pray as You, Lord Jesus, taught us

...

The Words of our Lord:

Distribution:

Communion Hymns:

“O Blessed, Holy Trinity” – **Hymn #876**

“Glory to God, We Give You Thanks and Praise” - **Hymn #946**

Dismissal:

Prayer After Communion:

P: Almighty God our Father, dwelling in majesty and mystery, renewing and fulfilling creation by Your eternal Spirit, and revealing Your glory through our Lord, Jesus Christ: Cleanse us from doubt and fear, and enable us to worship You, with Your Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, living and ruling, now and forever.

C: Amen.

Blessing: (Pastor)

C: Amen.

Closing Hymn: “*Glory Be to God the Father*” – **Hymn #506**

Postlude